Hot noodles wait for no one.

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by AtticusCrete

Summary

Encephalitis related AU. Because why should Will have all the brain on fire fun?

All short chapters. Alarming number already written..... sorry/not sorry.

Hah! Write for the Hannibal fandom they said. It'll be fun they said. Gothic. Tragic. They said. Lots of murder and mayhem and gas lighting, they said. You know. The good stuff. They said.

I'm writing rom coms and sit coms and om nom nom coms. Rom coms. With not so much of the coms!

Chapter 1

Hannibal Lecter opens his eyes. Rather too much of him is aching in unlocated but specific ways. His head in particular is pounding.

Beside him, on one side of the bed. And wait just a moment! This is not his bed. Is it? No this is a hospital bed. What?

On one side of the bed, slumped in an arm chair, a young woman with long brown hair, covered by an awful canvas coat, is asleep. Abigail Hobbs. Abigail Hobbs? That's not right she's at the cliff house. She should be. Isn't she?

On the other side of the bed also asleep and also slumped down in a terrible hospital arm chair is Will Graham. Will? But he's in the BSHCI. Isn't he? What?

Hannibal realises all is not as it might be. What is going on? He looks around his bed, IVs, monitors, he shifts, ah, a urinary catheter, hmm. Pain relief? Maybe he hasn't been awake before? He squints to see if there is a nurses' call button. He can't locate it. Well. That's not very satisfactory either. He closes his eyes. Maybe a bout of normal sleep will aid his recollection.

Chapter 2

The next time Hannibal opens his eyes Abigail is still there. This time she is reading a book. The jacket that previously covered her is now slung over the back of the other chair. On the same chair there is a large over stuffed satchel. Probably her's he thinks. Occasionally she reaches out and takes a long pull from a can of soda perched on the nearby night stand. Hannibal frowns. She shouldn't be drinking soda.

He closes his eyes and therefore misses when Will Graham comes back into the room, but he decides he might get a better handle on things if he keeps his eyelids down, feigns sleep, pretends, he's good at pretending,

'Hey Abbs, how's my girl?'

'Hey. Alright thanks. I've done most of my college work'

'Good thing. Any change?'

Hannibal hears him move the bag and drop down into the chair. He can hear the concern in Will's voice. Something must have happened. Something bad? To him.

'Not really. He sighed a bit earlier on, rustled. But the nurse came and said I shouldn't get excited. Just some random thing'

'Oh baby. It's ok. It might take a bit of time. I mean. How long was I out?'

If he could see them Hannibal would swear that Abigail gives Will a look that says 'I am 17 not 7, I know when someone unconscious or in a coma is bad news. Thanks. I'm not an idiot'

'Yeah I know. But you weren't as ill for as long beforehand'

'Ok. True enough. Do you want take out? Alana and Bev both offered to get something on their way in?'

'Really? Can Bev get Japanese? Or Korean. I don't care. Alana will just get something weird and vegan'

Will smiles. 'Sure, I'll text them both. Udon?'

'Yeah please'

'So obsessive. Just like your dad'

In his mind Hannibal smiles. Just like her father.

Wait. BEVERLEY KATZ!? WHAT!?

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Chapter 3

Hannibal is still feigning sleep thirty minutes later when first Alana and then Beverly arrives.

The foursome laugh and tease and joke with each other. Lots of affection and amusement. And take out. In Hannibal's IV food state the smells are tantalising. He'd drool if he had enough saliva to spare. He's trying hard to work out the relationships. That and the fact that Beverly Katz is alive and well and sitting on the end of his bed.

She should be in the ground by now. And by rights Will should still be in prison. Surely he's not here in Hospital because of what Matthew Brown did? No, no, that happened after Beverly. They are a happy bunch and remarkably unhelpful to him. Just when he thinks he might have to "wake up" there's a knock at the door and Jack Crawford comes in.

'Hey, hey. Sorry to interrupt the party. How's the big fella doing? Abbs, hey sweetheart, good to see you, how's your dad?'

DAD!? WHAT!?

'Oh. Maybe a teeny bit better today Mr Crawford. How's the Academy? Are you missing pops?'

'Sure, though it's better how's he's teaching a half load. The department can carry a lightweight, just about!'

Will laughs 'bloody cheek. I brought in $350,000 in grant money last year. You can can it!'

Jack laughs back 'I know. I just use and abuse you. I'm a thankless monster. Hey are those gyoza going spare?'

'No they're just sitting there' Will deadpans,

'Gods' Beverley laughs 'you're even worse than Hannibal. Were you as bad before you two were married?'

MARRIED!? WHAT!?

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Chapter 4

Some time into the evening Jack eventually leaves, his wife is due back from Italy late, so he's off to the airport to get her. Alana and Bev go too, Alana home to a fiancé and Bev to someone unspecified, but clearly known to them all.

Will and Abigail tidy up the take-out containers and a nurse comes in to check various monitors and medication levels. If he was willing to let on that he's awake Hannibal would beg for meds for his poor head. Though how much of that is pain and how much is confusion is moot at this point.

'Pop, the Doc said we should bring in some music for papa. How about some zydeco or something?'

Hannibal is about to give up all pretence when she carries on

'he'd hate it so much, he'd wake up just to beg us to switch it off'

Thank goodness, Hannibal thinks. Not everything in this new world is strange or unbelievable. It's rather more likely that he and Will are married than that he likes zydeco. Despite Will's heritage.

Will laughs at her 'that's not such an awful idea. Hey what other things can we bring in and make him listen to, or see, or touch'

'Or taste, or smell' Abigail giggles as she joins in

'Burnt coffee'

'Your fishing sweater? From Grandma?'

'Funny girl. Errrm. You practising the recorder when you were six'

'Oooh. Harsh but fair. Ok. Aunt Murasaki's weird incense'

'No that's Chiyoh's, but yeah. I take the point. Hmm. Oh. Yeah. That fish jelly thing we're all supposed to love but really no one does'

'Doesn't papa?'

'Shh. Don't tell. Not one bit'

'Even when Aunty Mischa makes it?'

MISCHA!? WHAT!?

.....

Chapter 5

Shall I take my bag down to the car? Can I have the keys'

'Sure honey. I'll just talk to your pa for a few minutes. I'll catch you up. Oh and don't buy more pop at the concession stand in the hall on the way out and then hide it in your bag'

Well, Hannibal thinks, at least Will is wise to Abigail's naughty food ways. He's curious now about what Will might say to him once they are alone. He hears Will sit down close beside the bed and then pull his chair even closer. It's scrapes a little on the floor, like a fingernail on a blackboard. Hannibal mentally winces and it takes considerable effort for it not to show on his face.

'Hey. Hey Hannibal' Will picks up Hannibal's hand and he clearly rubs it against the side of his face, his light stubble tickling if Hannibal were so inclined. He's not.

'We miss you. Abbs misses you. I miss you. A lot. A very big lot' he sighs gently and begins to kiss each of Hannibal's fingers. One by one. Like each finger must be kissed tenderly and properly before the close of day.

'The doc says you're really on the edge of waking up. You just have to want to. We really want you to. Abbs has a college recital in two weeks. We could go to that if you wake up. I'm back teaching now. Half load. So I can still be here during visiting hours. Jack's been great about that. The science team have been total stars. You'll have to cook something stupid as a thank you. When you wake up.'

He sounds very sad, and holds Hannibal's hand against his mouth, kissing it. Though Hannibal's hand is also wet with Will's tears now.

'Please wake up. Please. I can't bear it. I miss you so much. I need you. We both do. Oh Hannibal. I'm so sorry. If I'd realised. I'm so sorry. Please come back'

They both hear Will's phone buzz and Hannibal senses Will shift away to locate his cell. 'Alright, that's Abbs. She's been so good at making me eat, and shop, and I don't know, shower? Do the laundry, go to bed. It's hard to sleep Hannibal. The bed's too big without you. Please'

He stands then and Hannibal knows Will will lean over and kiss him. On his forehead and then gently against his lips. And oh how hard it is not to respond. With some reciprocal, tender love.

Wait? WHAT?

Chapter 6

After Will Graham has gone Hannibal wonders what possible elements of his life need to be unwound, how far back he needs to go, for them all to have reached this point.

So far, Mischa, Chiyoh, Murasaki, Abigail, Beverly, Jack, Will, Alana too. (Engaged? To whom?) All are different and not different.

He too is different. For certain. But how? There's no one to ask. Except. Possibly Bedelia? Would she be willing to talk him through his life to date? There's a sound at the door and Hannibal closes his eyes again. From the Noises they make two people have come into the room.

'What did the daughter say?'

'She said she thought he'd sort of stirred. She said he'd made the sheets rustle a bit or something. Is that a good thing? I told her not to get too excited? Was that the right thing to say? Sorry doctor. I've never nursed someone with encephalitis before'

'And I've never treated anyone either, well, apart from this poor man's husband! But we're getting there I hope'

'Have they presented the same?'

'No. Dr Graham had all kinds of terrible symptoms but didn't realise how bad he was until a catastrophic seizure. Dr Lecter thought his husband had had a stroke. Dr Lecter was just unlucky. It looked like low grade flu for a long time and then he just dropped, ten days after we let Dr Graham out'

'Nasty. Poor man. I thought, well, I'm not sure he's comfortable? Should his pain meds be higher?'

YES Hannibal wants to scream. They really should be.

'No' says the doctor, and Hannibal could kill him for this alone, this and not recognising encephalitis when the man already had one patient under his nose!

'No. Better not. I actually don't want him to be too comfortable. He's got to want to wake up'

Damn it! Encephalitis! And isn't that an irony? He bloody caught it from Will. Presumably the viral version. But there are still so many unknowns.

Maybe tomorrow will be clearer? He sincerely hopes so.

Chapter 7

He's been awake but not obviously so for about twenty minutes when there's a nudge to the door, someone comes in, and drops down into the armchair. It doesn't smell like Will, or Abigail. Or Jack. But it's familiar, cloying almost,

'Alright Dr Lecter, well you take a good picture unconscious but really I need new material. Any chance of you waking up and giving us another good news story?'

Ahh. Freddie Lounds. On the hospital beat?

'God it was bad enough with Will. And you're fucking breaking Mischa's heart. Look. It's her birthday soon. Please please, with fucking bells on top wake up before then. There's only so much smooching and cuddling will achieve. And fuck it, I was going to propose. But how can I when her darling brother is in a sodding coma. Come on Hannibal, play the bloody game. Wake up.'

Hannibal doesn't even begin to know where to begin with that little cascade of information.

Freddie hangs around for an hour, messing around on her lap top and cell by the sound of it. She has a few one sided conversations that Hannibal listens to avidly, mentally inserting the words at the other end,

'Alright darling, dry cleaning, sure. No, I'm there now. He looks fine. Just asleep. Fine. Yes I brought the blue pyjamas. I'll ask the nurse. No don't worry, they'll do it fine. Mischa, babe, there's tubes and shit and frankly when Han wakes up he won't want me to have changed his jim jams with or without help. Ok. Don't worry. I will. Alright. Love you'

'Hey Jack, Freddie Lounds. Alright? You know that gig the science team are working on, anything you want me to run? Really? That sounds great. Ok. Will you email me? Do you want pictures? I've got a guy. Ok I'll send him in. Thanks'

'Alana? Really, wow, I haven't spoken to you for ages. How are you? Yes? That's great, congratulations. I knew you were dating. That's really sweet. No no. Long time ago now. Did he tell you? He's a big sap. He very gently dumped me. Actually he introduced me to Mischa. I know. He can feel all smug about it now. Really? When? Ok. Yes. I see. I'll ask her. No no it's not tactless, you have something great to celebrate, you should. Han would what you to'

He might not, Hannibal thinks, and wait, what did she call him, HAN!? WHAT!?

That's very rude Ms Lounds. What's to be done about that?

Chapter 8

Later the same day Hannibal is beginning to decide he might just about be ready to miraculously "wake up" and cause much celebration and delight. He's got no books, no real distractions, and even his memory palace has only so many memories it's fun to revisit yet again.

And that's another odd thing, some of the rooms seem different. The contents not quite as he remembers, or rather as he remembers remembering. Now he's not sure if his memories are real or he's remembering a memory of a memory. Which might not be a memory. His head throbs again. Encephalitis. Yes. Ouch. Brain on fire. Idly he wonders which hemisphere or if it's both, and if that's why he seems to have had it differently worse to Will.

And where did Will get it? Tick borne viral encephalitis? It's present in the Continental US but where could he have picked it up? Previously Hannibal would have assumed from some case or random motel Will was compelled to stay in. But. And here's another worry. No one has mentioned the FBI. Or psychiatry. Certainly there is a science team, and Jack is some kind of boss in relation to it, and Will is teaching at an academy. But. There are still too many gaps. And what if Bedelia isn't his psychiatrist, what if she doesn't know his backstory? Who can help him fill in the yawning chasms of his memory?

He hears some voices outside the room, that doctor again.

'So then Hannibal how are you today? We're noting lots of brain activity. That's great. We think you're definitely on the mend. Bit of prompting and we'll have you back behind the harpsichord in no time. I suggested to Will that he brings in something to stimulate your memories - smells, tastes, music, he knows what your tastes run to these days. Still the rarified I'd wager!' He chortles to himself a little,

Hannibal realises he knows who the doctor is. After all they were at University together. Donald Sutcliffe.

DONALD SUTCLIFFE!? Now he's definitely supposed to be dead.

Chapter 9

Just for once Hannibal is actually properly asleep when his next visitor arrives. Bedelia Du Maurier looks around the room, reads the various cards and notes from well wishers. So bland, so dull. So predictable.

Hannibal read them all late last night once he was sure no one would discover his wakeful state. Nothing useful except that Alana is engaged to someone called Brian. They both signed the card. The only Brian he knows that he can recall is Brian Zeller. Surely not? Weren't he and Jimmy Price involved?

Bedelia looks down at Hannibal's sleeping form. This is the most vulnerable she's ever seen him. He's one of her preferred colleagues but she's never especially intimate with anyone. He's made some careful overtures of friendship, both he and Will, but she likes her solitude just a bit more than either of them.

She supposes if someone were to ask her she might call him a friend. He comes close to it. As close as anyone ever does or ever might. It might be convenient to call him a friend. Under certain circumstances. But this encephalitis is something of a frustration. It gives him an incontrovertible alibi. And puts some of her plans on hold.

She wonders if this might be to her benefit. It's possible that the encephalitis might impact his memory. And wouldn't that be useful? What he could be bent to believe?

She smiles, recognising an unanticipated opportunity she won't be able to avail herself of. If Hannibal were her patient there would be lots of opportunities to coach him a little, a gentle psychic driving. Sadly he's unlikely to simply open up to her like that. That's not the kind of relationship she has carefully cultivated with him.

Chapter 10

When Hannibal wakes next there is a faint perfume in the air. Bedelia? Damn it. She must have been and gone whilst he was asleep. Now he can't ask her. If indeed he wanted to drop the pretence of still being in a coma. He wonders if it's a bit like being able to go to your own funeral, you hear all the things people think about you and each other, that they'd never say in your conscious presence.

Maybe he'll give it another day or so. Just in case something or someone else he's completely forgotten turns up. And really he could do with just a bit more information. It'd be nice to have a handle on why Abigail Hobbs is now his daughter and actually calls him papa and certainly seems utterly unafraid. He'd like to know how long he's been married to Will as well as the state of their relationship. And what work does he do? Where do they live? And why does no one ever talk about useful things like what year it is, or who the President is, or how long he's been in hospital. He was ill for weeks apparently but how long has he been unconscious?

And also, and Hannibal knows he won't be able to ask anyone, what about the basement? What about the freezer? What about the "meat"?

Chapter 11

Hospitals are dull. Painful, sometimes sad, sometimes wonderful, but overall? Dull. Probably less so if you work there. If you're simply a patient or a visitor, especially if you're a conscious patient, it's dull. Booooooooring. Hannibal is bored. And what he knows hasn't grown exponentially in the last 24 hours.

The things he knows for sure? Married, child, sibling, aunt, colleagues, friends, cooking? harpsichord. Not zydeco. Done. Oh and of course encephalitis! It's not much to build your life around. Except that probably most people would consider these a rich and varied set of relationships and hobbies. Mentally Hannibal sneers, he has hobbies? Ugh.

What about opera? What about literature? Theatre? Ballet? Art? Couture? What about the grand and dramatic, the excessive and the radiant? What about how he remembers his life, the elevation of the mundane into something outstanding, transforming the banal into something truly magnificent? What about the hunt?

He's a little sad for a moment. Has he settled for ordinary? Pah. Better to be asleep then. He retreats into a sulky doze.

The next time he's alert to the presence of others there are three women in the room. Speaking in Japanese. For a moment he has a mental block and then something shifts and the words stop sounding like water over the stones of a koi filled pool and become sense. So. He speaks Japanese. That's a little more interesting.

The women chatter on

'Freddie thinks I don't know. She's being awfully sweet. She's probably waiting for my birthday. I hope Hanni has woken up by then.'

'If he hasn't?' An older voice Hannibal thinks. Murasaki?

'She'll wait. But it's killing Will'

'He blames himself.'

'But he was ill too. I thought he was going full on crazy.'

'He was. He nearly killed Hannibal. We shouldn't forget that'

Killed me! Wait? WHAT!?

Chapter 12

Now the hospital is anything but boring! Will tried to kill him? Atta boy. Now that's more like it! And because he had encephalitis. Alrighty, not everything is lost!

Hannibal carries on listening to the women's conversation but there's nothing more of interest except to learn that Robertus is still alive. Well. That's unexpected. Does he have the same memories?

When the women leave they each bend and kiss him on the cheek. From the scent clinging to the third kisser he thinks it might be Chiyoh. She always carried the scent of burnt offering with her.

A short while later the nurse returns. She hums and sings under her breath. Something poppy, awful, but sweet how she's singing to him. She punctuates her verses with little comments to him. Sometimes she sings her comments to the tune of the song she is almost singing

'Hello Dr Lecter, how are you today? You're looking good. Oh so good. Hmmm hummmm'

She deftly strips him of his pyjamas and washes and redresses him. She has a competent touch. Firm but friendly and kind. He can appreciate decent hospital care.

'Oh I remember when you worked here. Hmm hummm. You were so nice ohhh so niice. My friend Alice had such a crush on youuuu'

Ah. So he worked in the hospital. Medic? Administration?

'But we all knewwwwww, we weren't for you hoo hoooooo. Not with that lovely luvvvverlyyyyyy Dr Graham toooo'

the nurse laughs then at her own bad rhyming. And honestly? Hannibal is rather charmed.

Wait? CHARMED!? WHAT!?

Chapter 13

'Hey Will? I didn't know you'd be here, how's it going? God is that marking?'

'Jimmy! Main man! Yeah it is. But that's ok I can do it easily enough here. I've got to say the only up side of Hannibal being ill is I'm actually on top of my admin this semester'

'Well trust you to find an upside!'

Wait? Will is an OPTIMIST!? WHAT!?

'I know. I keep reminding myself of good stuff. Partly to stay positive but also because every now and again I remember something so brilliant I just have to tell Hannibal.'

'Sweet. That's very sweet. Is it like some kind of album?'

'What? Hannibal and Will the greatest hits?'

'No you dunce. A photo album'

'Oh. Well, maybe. Though it's a mixture of things really. All good. Great sometimes'

'Will Graham are you blushing?'

'Little bit'

'I'll say it again. That's sweet. I am sorry about this though. I know you're being very positive to people and I know it's tough. What's the trajectory?'

Oh good, someone who wants to talk about something sensible! Finally. Jimmy Price, Hannibal always liked him. A fine man. A sensible man.

'He had what we thought was flu for just over a month. Coincided with me totally losing it and then, well, let's just say it's a good job the gun wasn't loaded. Then I was here, well not actually here, just down the hall for six weeks, got home. Ten days later blam. Scared me and Abbs shitless. On the floor. Comatose. Nothing. He thought I'd had a stroke, I thought he'd just upped and died on us. And here we are three weeks later. Donald thinks he could come round any minute. Or he might stay like this half in and half out for a while.'

Hannibal adds things up in his head, that's four, plus six, plus one and a half, plus three

WHAT!? FIFTEEN WEEKS!? Good grief that's three and a half months! That's a whole season of opera he's missed. Probably. He does like opera. Surely? And wait a moment Will was going to shoot him! With a gun?

That's just RUDE!?

Chapter 14

Will is gently humming to himself, just some Grieg, Hannibal recognises it. Peer Gynt. When Will sits besides Hannibal's bedside he spends some of the time quiet, some of the time humming or gently singing and some of the time just talking. Hannibal has discovered he likes this version of Will even more than the one he previously framed, manipulated, drugged, coerced and, well, maybe it doesn't do to dwell on the past.

This Will is funny, intelligent, articulate, a loving father, employed, tender and clearly passionately, irrevocably in love with him. That's rather nice. Hannibal is just imaging their reunion when the door opens. Honestly what are the visiting hours here? It's just an endless stream!

'Iris, well this is a nice surprise'

'Will darling, kisses sweetie. I thought I must just put my head round the door. Here I brought you coffee. Has he got a tube we can tip some down?'

Will laughs with her 'sadly not. But thank you. Coffee is usually very welcome. Here, do have a seat, they're both pretty awful, do you want to try this one?'

'No darling, you stay there. I'll just hover on this one. You're right. Terrible. So, how is the darling man doing? I can't believe he's going to miss his own anniversary dinner party!'

'I know. I can't decide what to do about it. It seems crazy to celebrate something for the two of us if he's not there to celebrate it too. But I hate to let people down'

'Maybe we could call it a wake up party, you know record bits of it, play it back to him. I'm sure there are a few people on the Board who'd scare him awake. Though usually, to be fair, it's the clothes and not the persons that are so appalling'

'Iris Komeda you are not being rude about Frankly's tuxedo again are you?'

They both giggle.

WILL GIGGLES!? With his OPERA FRIENDS!?

If Hannibal wasn't already "comatose" this would lay him out flat

WILL IS SOCIABLE!? WHAT!?

Chapter 15

Hannibal still doesn't know what his own employment is. He's not a hospital doctor any more. Maybe he's retired? The room is empty so he sneaks a look at his hands. Hmm. Maybe late forties or early fifties. They're clearly well tended. So, he looks after himself. Good. Hannibal hopes he dresses decently. He suspects he does. Hopes he does. It's annoying there are no mirrors. And any clothes that might be his are out of sight in a locker or similar.

It's so peculiar what he can recall and what he can't. He's not sure he'd recognise a picture of himself. But he'd know Will and he knew Abigail. He's also not quite sure what he sounds like. Mischa only spoke in Japanese so he's not sure what her English speaking voice is like. And really he's not a hundred percent sure what the rest of his body looks like.

He lifts the covers up and sneaks a look down his body. Alright. Pretty good. He pulls the collar of his pyjama jacket away from his body so he can see down his chest and torso. Hmm. Decent amount of hair. Curling, slightly greying in places. Nicely masculine he concludes. He pulls out the waistband of his pyjama pants. And well, there's the urinary catheter, but apart from that. Yes. Very good. That seems exceptionally appropriate. No wonder Will misses him!

But if this is what he looks like, what of who he is? It's clear from Iris Komeda's visit he's on some charitable board. That's a good thing. Virtuous. And Iris he associates with the opera. And dinner parties. And it sounds like he's about to miss one. His own. Unless he wakes up. Properly. If he doesn't Will will have to cancel. What a shame? And rather impolite. Or he'll carry on and invite people and get people in to cater.

Wait!? WHAT!? In HIS KITCHEN!?

No no no no no. Ahh. Just a teeny bit possessive then. Hannibal smirks to himself. Really this unconscious find out about your self from others and your own reactions is better than therapy. Bedelia's not been back. Pity.

Chapter 16

After a moderately satisfying day with plenty of Will, first in the morning and then again in the late afternoon Hannibal is satisfied with the day's revelations. To be sure they are small, but gradually his own mental picture of himself is becoming three dimensional. Add a sense of time to the picture and he'd be back to himself.

So, maybe just until tomorrow. Ahh. That slight smell of antiseptic and competence. The singing nurse, he must concentrate on stilling himself. She had inadvertently tickled him this morning. He's not ticklish. Not at all. Except. Well. Except there.

'Oooh Dr Graham, how nice to see you. How's the FBI treating you hoo?'

'Hello Sonja. Good actually. It's the Academy though. I'm a very happy teacher not an agent'

'But you put the bad guys away?'

'Well, I help prepare the people who will put the bad guys away. I do my own small bit. And I'm lucky I spend a lot of time with bugs'

'Yeah. I heard that. Bugs? Who knew. You so cute too. You helped that nice agent last year didn't you? She was all over the television. Some birdy name?'

'Oh Clarice? Yeah sure, Agent Starling, it was a Death's Head Moth, Acherontia Styx. I identified it from a chrysalis. They're just amazing. You can talk to a chrysalis, coax it, intuit what's going on, but you never really know what's going to emerge, they're just not predictable like that. Beautiful though. And yeah it helped her find the girl. Got her out alive'

'We were so proud when you came in when you were ill. Like having a celebrity patient.'

'Really? That's hilarious. Glad to be of service. More so with Hannibal though?'

'Of course! We're secretly desperate for him to wake up so we can get his autograph'

'Good job he's asleep! Don't let him hear you say that. We'll never get him back through the front door his head will be so big!'

What? WHAT!? He's famous? A celebrity? WHY!?

Chapter 17

Now! Now Hannibal is too excited to even consider going to sleep. The temptation to ask Will is almost beyond him. He's just about hanging on. What could he be famous for?

Jack mentioned the harpsichord? Is he a musician? Or a chef? But he was a doctor? Maybe a famous piece of research or discovery? Maybe he helps Will and consults with him for the FBI? Maybe they solved, hmmm, given his other possible occupation, maybe not?

Wills alone again, he could just wake up and ask. But really? Really he needs a bit more information on that other thing. Is he or isn't he? And really it's not just something you can introduce into polite conversation "do excuse me, but am I a serial killing Cannibal?" At least it's not that he's famous for. So it's something else.

But that means, well, how on earth can he do both? What about work/life balance? What about time to pursue other interests? What about his parental responsibilities? What about things like that? He must be almost superhuman to manage all that! Almost a double life, by day a mild mannered super intelligent handsome something, loving parent and husband and pillar of community, and by night a hard hitting multiple murdering Cannibal super-villain vigilante type!

WAIT!? He's not BATMAN is he!? WHAT!?

No, no, that's ridiculous. The meds must be affecting him more than he thought.

It's been quiet for an hour. Will might be asleep, he's making gentle snuffly noises every other breath. It's rhythmic and Hannibal almost finds it soothing. He sneaks a peek. Will is as lovely as he remembers. And rather better dressed than the coat might have suggested. Maybe it pre-dates Hannibal?

He's almost tempted to "awaken' right now, to revel in Will's certain delight. But really the poor man looks tired so Hannibal decides to let him sleep. Very well then, tomorrow.

It seems like a plan. Wait? That's familiar somehow?

Is he Hannibal from THE A TEAM!? WAIT!? WHAT!?

Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

'Is he awake?'

YES

'No, but there's definitely more brain activity, pass me that pillow case will you?'

DUH, he's a superbrain! Hannibal's sure of that, if not the other thing,

'Sure, here you are. Dr Sutcliffe said they'd try a medically induced reversal if he doesn't come out of it naturally today or tomorrow'

'Really? And the other one, thanks'

'No problem. Yes. Change his meds, try some physical therapy'

'Has Dr Graham been told yet? Have you checked the IVs?'

'Yes. Last night. He was a bit upset. And yes, checked.'

Who has upset Will? That's not alright at all. His Will. The only person who is permitted to upset Will is Hannibal. And possibly Abigail. Maybe.

'Oh dear. Did he hope he'd come round naturally? Right where's the empty bag, this one is almost full'

'Dr Sutcliffe had been quite insistent on it. But well. It's not gone according to plan. I think Dr S might have implied that the family haven't tried enough. I think that's partly what upset Dr Graham. Here you go. Gosh right. Lots of liquid! That's good. Flush the system out'

'Oh. That's a shame, he's pretty devoted. They both are. I though Dr L would cry a flood when Dr G was brought in after the seizure. Thanks'

'It was pretty bad'

Oh. Thinks Hannibal. Oh dear. Maybe he shouldn't be deceiving Will? The others? Pah. But Will?

Wait!? WHAT!? GUILT!? REGRET!? Noooo. Surely not!?

Both nurses have gone a bit quiet. One of them sighs. 'Shall we change his pyjamas now?'

'No his sister is bringing a new pair in at lunch time. Better to wait. So, Dr Sutcliffe thinks this stage is just going on too long.'

'Oh is that it? I wondered if, hold the door for me will you, hands full!'

'Sure. What did you wonder?'

WAIT!? Don't go out the door without finishing that sentence. COME BACK!

Right, thinks Hannibal, I shall definitely wake up today. As soon as Will comes in. Well maybe not quite the exact same moment, that might be a bit of a give away. But shortly after. Maybe whilst Will is talking to him. Oh that would be very touching. Romantic.

WAIT!? WHAT!? FEELINGS!? Ugh.

Chapter End Notes

The conversations that nurses have whilst doing usual hospital things are quite amazing. You have to know which bit to pay attention to, or it can get very peculiar!

Chapter 19

Right then, hurry up Will. Now Hannibal wants to be awake he wants to be awake, now, please. Hmm, just a touch of impatience there? Maybe. Come on Will.

Hannibal is happily thinking of their imminent reunion when he realises a monitor next to him has started beeping urgently. He glares at it. Oooh, so has that one. And oh listen a whole cascade of sound as several others are tripped by his increasing movement and activity. Oops he's just woken up enough to wake up everything else too. Ah well, nothing for it then...

There's a rush at the door and two nurses and the doctor on call for the ward struggle with each other to be the first in. The doctor pulls rank, and his height and weight, and gets through the door first. One of the nurses makes sure to get a sharp elbow in his side though just so he doesn't try that move too often.

'Dr Lecter, wonderful. I'll call Donald Sutcliffe. And your husband, oh Sonja is already, good oh. Marvellous, marvellous. Don't try to talk just yet, we'll get you some ice chips, and get the tubes and stuff out. Excellent. Oh I'm really very pleased. Utterly on target. We'd have had to pull you out otherwise. Phew. That would have been very dull! I won't shake your hand. We'll get the lines sorted. I'll come back for an autograph when you've had a chance to get used to us all!'

FOR GOD'S SAKE TELL ME WHY!?!!

'How are you feeling. Gosh. It's great. How's the memory? I won't ask the obvious ones. I'm sure you know who the president is, what year it is, and so on'

NO I DON'T, HELP ME YOU FOOL!

Hannibal manages a growly gurgle

'Yes, yes we'll get on to that. Excellent. Sonja what did Dr Graham say?'

'He's already on his way here.'

'Very good. Can you sort out Dr L's lines and tubes and things? I'm sure he'd like to be reunited with his nearest and dearest without looking like some medical bdsm gone wrong'

The doctor chortles at his own joke. Good job because both nurses are ignoring him and getting on with lines and tubes and ouch, thank you very much. They all pause momentarily when they hear the door at the other end of the corridor to the ward bang open and then swing closed followed by running footsteps down the ward. Getting closer.

The door is practically thrown open

'HANNIBAL!?!!'

Chapter 20

It had passed in something of a whirlwind. After Will practically smothered Hannibal with kisses and caresses, Abigail arrived, and then there were also tears and family hugs. Hannibal found himself unable to speak, his voice grown hoarse from disuse over an extended period.

The medical staff had tactfully retreated when Will had burst through the door and thrown himself across the room. He only just restrained himself knowing that after three months even Hannibal might find a sudden lapful of empathic teacher husband too much.

Instead Will settled on the side of Hannibal's bed and wound his way between the remaining tubes and lines and covered Hannibal's face in kisses. 'Thank you. Oh thank you so much. Oh Hannibal. God. Oh. Thank goodness'

Hannibal responded by wrapping his arms around Will, holding him close and letting himself be petted and nuzzled. It was rather moving how glad Will was that he had woken. Possibly better than even Hannibal had let himself imagine. When Will shifted beside him, Hannibal realised just how delighted Will was.

Will laughed 'not now boner! Later' Hannibal creaked a laugh. Which set Will off. They were both laughing and holding on to each other when Abigail threw herself through the door and across both Will and Hannibal, Will making space so she fitted between them, 'Pa! Oh my god. How long? Dad, did you call me right away. Oh my god you're awake. I'm so glad. Oh my god'

There were tears then, between them. For each other. For what can be lost or saved in the blink of an eye. Or an expensive piece of medical equipment. As they gradually stopped crying and Will fed Hannibal some ice chips, he finally managed a few words.

'I had forgotten this sweet delight. How lucky I am to wake up to you both'

There would have been more tears then except that Mischa arrived. And so began a whole cascade of visitors and crucially, further information, rounding out his memories.

But not everything. Not yet. Still. Sufficient unto the day. He'd still have some recovery time in hospital and recuperation time at home. He could wait. He smiled at Will who was looking at him happily. Hmm. Yes. That particular reunion was worth savouring the anticipation of.

Ah, yes APPETITE good!

Chapter 21

The next week was spent in physical therapy and careful monitoring. Will an almost constant presence, his tender attentions making Hannibal preen. When Will finally brought in a selection of clothes for Hannibal to choose from for his homecoming he was delighted to find they would put a peacock to shame.

When Will had to be absent to teach usually either Abigail or Mischa would visit in his stead. Mischa brought in a photo album one day and snuggled up beside him on the bed, he with one arm slung round her. She went through the photos laughing with him. He was delighted to have his biography so clearly documented.

Their childhood home in Lithuania, their parents (sadly killed in a car crash which both the children survived) their home as teenagers in Paris with Murasaki, Robertus and Chiyoh. Hannibal's boarding school and graduation day. Pictures clearly sent home from Johns Hopkins, good grief even one of him and his classmates Donald Sutcliffe included.

Then slowly there were a few pictures that included Will. A walking holiday, one with Will and Mischa standing close to each other, another of Hannibal with his arms round Will trying to prevent Will from stuffing a smore into Hannibal's mouth, one of the three of them probably taken by a helpful stranger. Then Christmas and Easter celebrations. With an older man in one the spit of Will.

Then Hannibal and Will's wedding. They looked so young. Will was young! Just graduated. Going on to a PhD. Hannibal a resident. Twenty two and thirty one. They'd been married for almost 20 years. The wedding cake had two porcelain grooms on the top, and there was a picture of Beverly throwing confetti over both of them where it was clear she'd accidentally thrown it right into their mouths!

Pictures of Mischa, then Will, then Murasaki all holding a baby, of course, Abigail. Hannibal didn't quite manage to find out where she'd come from. But he felt confident he'd find something at home to assist. Ahh. Home. There were no pictures of their house. At least not the one Hannibal recalled. All saturated colour, gilt edging, classical features, significant art, antlers, horns, the epitome of carnality and reminders of the flesh.

There was however a light and airy house, with matting and stripped pine or limed oak floors, long curtains, books everywhere, scientific and musical instruments, soft colours, textures and tones designed as a backdrop to happy, busy, interesting lives.

All very nice. But what had happened to his house?

Chapter 22

'Freddie's going to propose. On my birthday. You might have forgotten? We're having a joint party. Your wedding anniversary and my birthday? Nearly the same day. Or near enough anyway. She doesn't know I know. You won't tell will you?'

'Mischa, my dearest love of course not. We can make a special cake though, a layer for us and a layer for you? We could make some figures, Will and I, and you, and add a Freddie one once it's happened. How would that be? Will she propose at the party? Did I ask before, how do you know?'

'You told me'

'When?'

'Ages ago. Don't you remember?'

'I don't'

'Oh. Gosh. I hope we're right! I've told lots of people!'

'Oh my love I'm sure it will be fine!'

Hannibal can't tell Mischa what he heard Freddie say when he was supposedly unconscious. Oops.

She's come to help pack things up at the hospital to take home. Home. Abigail is currently being slightly less helpful as she's sprawled on the more comfortable chair in the room, thumbing through her phone,

'Oooh look, Freddie's done a new piece on the Ripper'

'Oh?' Hannibal tries for nonchalant 'what does she say?'

'Oh, that he's even bigger and more out there this time round. She's so over the top! It's hilarious!'

'It's been four months now. He's going to be number one soon isn't he?' Mischa shakes her head. Freddie's journalism and her sensibilities not always coinciding.

Hannibal discerns the tension in the room 'might I ask if one of you would get some tea before we go?'

Abigail smiles her delight 'totally Pa, I'll get some, Aunty Mischa what would you like? Sorry if I'm being annoying'

'Oh darling, I just worry. Freddie does put herself out there sometimes'

The two women exchange smiles and Abigail hugs her aunt and then kisses her father. And trips out of the room, wallet and the hope of secret soda in mind.

Hannibal looks at Mischa 'You're not really concerned are you? About Freddie?'

'No. I'm being silly. I just don't want anything to go wrong between now and then, it's only two weeks now'

Hannibal smiles. Nothing will get in the way of Mischa's happiness.

Nothing and no one.

Chapter 23

Ahhh. The pleasures of home. The one from the photographs, not his memory. Will picks Hannibal up from hospital along with a collection of cards and plants and flowers. Abigail has gone to an evening lecture so they are alone together. Hannibal feels a mixture of pleasure to be in Will's company and a startling sense of trepidation. Not about Will. No that's all very pleasing. But about the house. And what might or might not be in it.

When they arrive Hannibal looks up at the two storeys. From the outside it is unassuming but pleasant. Not alarming in anyway. But facades can hide many things, as can masks, and person suits.

Will let's them both in, 'I've got your keys here somewhere. Here let me take that', Will takes one of the bags from Hannibal. 'Shall we put them upstairs?' Hannibal follows Will up the stairs, it rings a bell just faintly. So does their bedroom.

He takes a deep breath. This seems. Familiar. Safe. Secure. Theirs. He takes another deeper breath and laughs when he releases it letting go of some of the tension. He hadn't realised he felt so tense. Will puts down the bags and box he is carrying and comes round the side of the bed to where Hannibal is standing,

'You've been worried? You haven't let on but you can't remember everything can you?'

Hannibal looks at Will, he should have realised that Will was as empathic as he remembered, that that at least was an accurate memory.

'You're right.' He pauses 'There are some alarming gaps. I don't know how Abigail came into our lives for example. I don't know what work I do. I was a doctor wasn't I? I had to wait for Mischa to tell me how long we'd been together'

'Here sit beside me' Will sits on the edge of the bed and pats the space next to him. Hannibal sits and turns towards him. Will leans into him and kisses him gently 'alright then, what's the worst thing?' Hannibal hangs his head, and just slightly shakes it, he can't bear to ask. To even hint.

'Alright then. Kiss me some more and then I'll take you on a tour, some things might come back to you, now you're home. And you can ask me. Truly. Anything.'

Hannibal smiles. As they kiss some more, some very good memories located in this room come back to him.

The tour is put on hold for an hour or two.

Chapter 24

Hannibal looks down at Will sleeping peacefully. Hannibal is pleasantly tired out. Donald Sutcliffe had been quite direct in hospital when Hannibal had broached his recovery schedule.

'Hannibal are you asking about sex? For god's sake man. Have at it. I imagine it's been a bit of a drought given you've both been ill for what? Four months. If you're too tired stop. If you're not. Then don't. As you like it. To quote the bard'

Hannibal had tried not to wince at his awful joke. Here at home, in the quiet comforts of their bedroom, they had both not wanted to stop. And it had been exceptionally good. Hannibal stretches carefully, dislodges one of Will's arms from atop his and slides out of the bed. He collects a robe from the back of the door and ties it tight round himself.

He's going to have a little tour all his own.

On this floor is a room that is clearly Abigail's when she is here. There are two other guest rooms. Some stairs lead to an attic converted into a workspace which looks like it might be Will's. What with the fishing ties, books on insects and specimen jars Hannibal decides not to investigate too closely, and what look like student papers and lecture notes, it's very likely.

Back down stairs he finds another bathroom. On the ground floor there's a family living room, a dining room, a dream of a kitchen, a small office clearly his, a conservatory out back, and what could only be described as a library where there is also both a piano and a harpsichord.

Hannibal is about to be distracted by the kitchen and it's potential dark delights when his eye is caught by an envelope folder on a small table next to a couch.

On the cover in neat and stylish marker pen is one word and a number in Roman numerals,

"Hasdrubal VIII"

He picks it up. It's his handwriting. Sitting down on the couch he opens the folder, pulls out a sheaf of notes and settles in to read.

Epilogue

Freddie hops onto a low stool and clinks her glass loudly, Hannibal tries not to wince worried about the completeness of one of his preferred sets of glassware 'So, everyone. You've probably done enough cheering to last a lifetime! But hey there's always room for more cake and champagne and wotnot'

Someone cheers from the back of the conservatory in Will and Hannibal's house, 'yay, wotnot'

'Yes thanks for that. Anyway. So "Hasdrubal VII" just hit #1 on the New York Times best seller list and #1 on The Times of London list too. Cheers to that'

There are loud cheers! And toasting of glasses.

'And Will and Hannibal have managed twenty years! Despite serial killers and deadly insects and the dreadful hours of surgeons, and some very odd patients, and friends, you know I mean you, and writing the most ridiculous series of thrillers you could imagine, and thanks for making my character such a bitch, it's driven up ad revenue!'

'And fannibals' shouts Beverly from the doorway

'Thank you Bev, I couldn't forget the fannibals, and the weirdness of every writer's festival and con you can mention, and Abigail, she's bribed me not to say more'

There are lots of cheers and Abigail takes a small bow. Freddie carries on 'And of course our good friend Encephalitis who nearly prevented this very event! So, twenty years, and that's amazing, Hannibal and Will everyone!'

More cheering, more toasts, and no-one in the room thinks they're done, Mischa having managed to tell pretty well everyone Freddie is going to propose. Now they're all waiting for Ms Confident Sassy Baitch to do it.

Freddie looks almost composed, all that betrays her is a tremor in her hand 'oh look' she says 'I'm all nervous!' There are some kind gentle laughs, laughing with her not at her 'so. Hannibal and Will are a great example of what love can do. I fancy a bit of that. I reckon it's in the genes. So, you know, I thought I'd be all clever and come up with some great speech. But really, it's simple, Mischa? Honey? You're the best person I know. You make me want to be a better person too. Yeah thanks folks I know I won't be, but I can hope, shut up already. So. Well. God this is harder than I thought. Will you mar'

'YES' squeams Mischa before Freddie has even finished 'YES PLEASE'

Will laughs 'that's exactly what Hannibal said!'

Hannibal looks at him and takes his hand and kisses it.

'I remember it well'

And finally, he does.

Trailer for Part 2

If you liked this the good news is that part 2 is now in the works (it went from I woke up, read comments, vague notion, to total plan in ten minutes flat).

If you subscribed to the series you'll get sent the new story automatically. I know you know this. If you only subscribed to 'hot noodles wait for no one' you might not notice it in the smorgasbord of delight that is the daily offering of wonderful talent in the Hannibal Fandom that part two has landed.

The new instalment will be called 'Are those gyoza going spare?'

Same format. Same fluff. Same references to Japanese food. But with a new story! Mwah ha ha! But still fluff! I promise.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!